

Kentucky Postsecondary Education Network

What is the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Network (KPEN)?

KPEN is a collaboration of all state-supported institutions in a high-speed network specifically designed for postsecondary education applications. It accommodates high-demand, high-access Internet users and provides an easy mechanism for expansion of network services. KPEN services extend to all postsecondary education institutions through a master agreement developed between the University of Kentucky and the primary contractor Alltel who then procures circuits from BellSouth and other telecommunications companies as necessary. The Council on Postsecondary Education, working through UK, financially supports a baseline network for the state-supported institutions. Institutions may purchase additional services and bandwidth directly from the master agreement.

How many Kentucky students, faculty, and staff are served by the program?

This program supports Internet access for 200,633 students and 25,790 faculty and staff members (source: CPE's fall 2004 data) from the state-supported postsecondary education institutions.

Why is a program like this needed?

Postsecondary education is dependent on high-speed, high-bandwidth networks for the transmission of information. Students access classes through high-speed networks and access electronic library databases through the Web; faculty and students communicate with colleagues at other institutions throughout the United States and the world using the Internet; and high-level research depends on data sharing between and among postsecondary education institutions, researchers, and the world. Economic development initiatives related to the transformation to a new economy require high-speed lines capable of moving voice, video, and vast amounts of data across distances reliably.

The collaboration of postsecondary institutions in a single KPEN network results in significant savings to the Commonwealth.

What is the Council's request?

The Council requests \$700,000 in each year of the biennium for KPEN to supplement the base appropriation of \$2 million in order to continue to provide a basic level of support for the network.

Why is the additional funding needed?

In FY 2003-04, the budget for KPEN was reduced inadvertently by \$750,000. These funds were needed to support a basic level of service for the network.

Currently, using a combination of nonrecurring and recurring resources, the Council is providing this basic level of service to each institution. The \$700,000 allocation each year is required to continue providing a baseline of support. Restoration of the budget to the FY 2002-03 level, prior to the budget reduction, would restore KPEN and allow it to continue. If additional funds are not allocated to KPEN in 2006-08, institutions will be forced to reallocate funds from their internal budgets, or the network will have to be seriously curtailed.



Photo source: KSU

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